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Schulich School of Business - Alumni

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*Photos courtesy of the Prime Ministers Office -Ottawa

It is reported that the office of governmental Presidents and Prime Ministers may receive upwards of ten thousand notes of correspondence from citizens each week. As in most government offices, a dedicated team of interns and employees read through letters grasping the pulse of their Nation to better understanding concerns and thoughts of those citizens who take the time to have their voices heard. Generally each letter represents not just an individual, but a community of like minded citizens sharing similar points of view and looking to express what's on their mind to their country's 'chief-in-command'. Of the many letters that are sent to government, a small percentage actually make it to the President or Prime Ministers desk. It is understood that if a letter speaks to a very important point and comes across as an 'eye opener' written in a non-threatening tone, it just may be read, first hand, by the President or Prime Minister. It is also understood that if the letter is unique and engaging enough, the government may just issue a response back.

Given this information, a Richmond Hill business owner seems to have caught the attention of Parliament Hill after having received not only a personal letter from *The Right Honourable Stephen Harper Prime Minister of Canada,* but an invite to meet with him at his Ottawa based office in the country's capital.

"I was honoured when I received a phone call from his [PM Harper's] office. I had sent a letter to the government not too long ago. ", says Riyaz Datoo owner of Crystallize It Inc.

President of Crystallize It, Riyaz Datoo (left) visits the office of the Right Honourable Stephen Harper (right) Prime Minister of Canada

Datoo started his business in 3D modelling and 'intra-surface' burning within optic crystal in 2004 soon after graduating from the Schulich School of Business in Ontario Canada. Since then he has founded several companies, and expanded his product line globally.

"My letter to the Canadian government was to voice my sentiment on them 'rolling the dice' when it comes to backing new, innovative concepts that are deemed to be well calculated risks. All too often excellent ideas are left on the backburner never to be seen because of issues in securing the much needed financing. At the same time we hear of mega success stories such as USA based Facebook , Apple and others, which were founded because someone or some entity took a risk at the beginning and invested in them. Similarly, Canada has so much innovation, invention and

talent to offer. If start-ups are supported through government backed loans in conjunction with financial institutions when they require it most, our nation will continue to be very much on the world map for ingenuity."

Datoo himself is a real example of 'concept to creation.' He relied on government backed venture funding supplied through one of Canada's major banks when he first started his business. He confirms that this injection of capital was the lifeline to his business which enabled him to maintain 100% equity in his company with a fair payback schedule.

Clearly Datoo's story resonates with many young start-up companies sharing dreams of beginning and running their own businesses. When asked about his thoughts on how to effectively launch a business, Datoo emphasizes the benefit of presenting a business plan to financial institutions whether one requires financing or not.

"Presenting your business plan to the bank is an excellent litmus test for the concept of your business. The bank will challenge you on your numbers, contingencies, and sustainability of your idea. If they are willing to lend you money, it says a lot about how solid they feel your business plan is. Whether you decide to take a loan or not, it is imperative to do your homework and understand the many government programs in place and available to you and your business," says Datoo.

As far as his visit to Parliament Hill, Datoo says he and his wife very much enjoyed being a guest of the Prime Minister of Canada in the House of Commons.

"After attending question period, we were escorted to Mr Harper's office in the Center Block. Once at his desk we discussed the dynamics of local manufacturing as well as cross border distribution of both our physical products and intangible services. We explained the laser process while he examined a 3D crystal of his family portrait now displayed on his desk. It's nice to see our government recognize the risks that private Canadian business owners take to not only establish revenue streams for themselves, but more importantly to contribute back to the economy by way of employment and export dollars"

Mr Harper (left) examines a 3D crystal model during his discussion with Riyaz (right) about Canadian innovation and Business development

Datoo's products which have expanded through distribution partners to the USA, UK, India and Middle East can be viewed at **www.crystallizeit.com** & **www.youbobble.com.**